

ferred casts over the spirit, followed by the  
delight which  
arises at an unexpected success. No doubt,  
when he first  
planned "Les Rougon Macquart," in 1868, he  
was still very  
imperfectly equipped for his selected task;  
and the fact  
that he should have attempted it under such  
circumstances  
shows that he possessed more than the usual  
amount of con-  
fidence that a young man usually places in his  
powers. But  
his experiences during the next four or five  
years altered  
everything, for they greatly increased his  
equipment and  
rendered the successful prosecution of his task  
a possibility.  
Each time he turned to a fresh volume of his  
series he  
began by preparing an *&bauche*, or as he  
generally preferred  
to say in his letters, a *ma\*gwitte* that is a  
rough model of the  
intended work. The Rougon or the Macquart  
who was to  
figure most prominently in it had been  
previously chosen;  
he knew what was to be that character's  
environment, and  
the philosophical idea which was to govern  
the volume.  
Taking his pen in hand, he now pictured such  
secondary  
characters as the proposed *milieu* suggested,  
and set down  
such facts and incidents as might logically  
ensue from the  
chosen characters and their surroundings.  
Briefly, in a  
broad and somewhat vague way, he built up  
a subject.  
Those general notes having been placed in a  
portfolio by  
themselves he next took his characters in hand,  
one by one,

noting their respective histories, ages, health, physical appearance and nature, disposition, habits, and associations.

That work having been completed was placed in a second portfolio, and Zola next passed to the question of environment, collecting a variety of information respecting the different localities where the scenes of his narrative were to be laid. Next he started an inquiry into the professions